

# SUMMARY REPORT

## 65TH ANNUAL MEETING

*of the*

## SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

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MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE | JULY 16-20, 2011

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SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE  
*of*  
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS



AUGUST 2011



## INSIDE:

From the Chair .....	2
Hunger in the South .....	3
SLC & Committee Leadership .....	4
Program Highlights.....	5
Meeting Summaries	
Agriculture & Rural Development....	6
Economic Development,	
Transportation & Cultural Affairs....	8
Education.....	10
Energy & Environment.....	12
Fiscal Affairs & Government	
Operations.....	14
Human Services & Public Safety .....	16
Gulf Coast & Atlantic States	
Task Force .....	18
Legislative Service Agency	
Directors.....	19
Technical Tours.....	20
Conference Notes.....	21
Sponsors.....	22
Host State Committee & Staff.....	23
SLC 2012 in West Virginia.....	24

# SOUTHERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

OF

## THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

P.O. Box 98129  
Atlanta, Georgia 30359  
404/633-1866

[www.slcatlanta.org](http://www.slcatlanta.org)

## SERVING THE SOUTH

# FROM THE 2010-2011 SLC CHAIR

This year's SLC annual meeting reinforced my belief that the Southern Legislative Conference truly is the premier public policy gathering in the South and an organization in touch with the needs of our region.

In addition to convening more than 25 substantive policy sessions, the SLC embarked on two major undertakings which reflect the unity and cohesiveness of our region. In an effort to address the important issue of food insecurity and provide a service to the Mid-South Food Bank, SLC members packaged an unprecedented 20,000 meals in less than 90 minutes. Additionally, the SLC provided financial support to the local area chapters of the American Red Cross that coordinated relief efforts in six of our member states that were ravaged by the spring storms. This outpouring of friendship by our members for our sister states is a testament to the strength and unity of the Southern Legislative Conference.

Our summary of program highlights provides a glimpse of the breadth and depth of the topics discussed at the SLC Annual Meeting. Over the four days of the gathering, policymakers participated in conversations on the most pressing issues facing states today and provided concrete recommendations on where solutions can be found. What cannot be captured on these pages, and what consistently makes the Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference the premier gathering of state officials anywhere, are the innumerable, productive conversations among legislators, sharing experiences and opinions, that reinforce the collective cause of bettering government.

I hope you find this summary a useful introduction to the work of the Conference while in Memphis. I invite you to visit us on the web at [www.slcalanta.org](http://www.slcalanta.org) to learn more about the presentations and activities from the meeting, and I hope to see you in Charleston, West Virginia, next year as the SLC continues to assist policymakers in charting a strong course forward.

Sincerely,



*Representative Billy Broomfield, Mississippi, SLC Chair Elect, Speaker Richard Thompson, West Virginia, SLC Chair 2011-2012, and Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, Tennessee, SLC Chair 2010-2011*



## THE SLC ANNUAL MEETING TAKES ON HUNGER IN THE SOUTH

While the economic downturn of the Great Recession has contributed substantially to this plight so unfamiliar to one of the world's most wealthiest nations – a country where our ability to feed millions is unparalleled and we enjoy the lowest food costs in the world– millions of American families' financial resources already were stretched beyond their ability to access the barest of necessities - food.

According to Feeding America, the nation's leading hunger relief charity, the number of people being served by its network of pantries, kitchens and shelters rose 46 percent between 2005 and 2009. The non-profit reports that in 2009 alone, 14.7 percent of households, representing more than 50 million Americans, were food insecure, meaning they did not always have access to enough food to meet basic needs.

Food insecurity, which affects individuals across the country, disproportionately impacts the South, where Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas have significantly higher rates of household food insecurity than the national average. This phenomenon is more alarming in rural areas– known as food deserts –where the cost of food typically is higher, food banks are fewer, and the problem is widely hidden.

In a dual effort to confront and eliminate food insecurity in the region, the SLC organized an expert panel to provide an overview of the issue and to discuss the collaboration among public and private entities underway. Attendees were given an opportunity to “take action against hunger” by packaging an unprecedented 20,000 meals for distribution to families in need in the mid-South region during a 90-minute food drive challenge. The effort far exceeded expectation, completing the task in just over half the amount of time allotted.





# 2011-2012 CONFERENCE AND COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

## CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP



**Speaker Richard Thompson**  
West Virginia, Chair



**Representative Billy Broomfield**  
Mississippi, Chair Elect



**Representative Keith Ingram**  
Arkansas, Vice Chair



**Senator Mark Norris**  
Tennessee, Immediate Past Chair

## COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

### AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**Representative Terry England**  
Georgia, Chair



**Senator Joey Pendleton**  
Kentucky, Vice Chair

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS



**Representative Billy Broomfield**  
Mississippi, Chair



**Senator Bill Sample**  
Arkansas, Vice Chair

### EDUCATION



**Representative Sara Thomas**  
Mississippi, Chair



**Senator Ken Yager**  
Tennessee, Vice Chair

### ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT



**Representative Chuck E. Martin**  
Georgia, Chair



**Representative Denny Altes**  
Arkansas, Vice Chair

### FISCAL AFFAIRS & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS



**Representative James R. "Jim" Fannin**  
Louisiana, Chair



**Representative Randy McDaniel**  
Oklahoma, Vice Chair

### HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC SAFETY



**Representative Sharon Cooper**  
Georgia, Chair



**Senator Emmett Hanger, Jr.**  
Virginia, Vice Chair

### GULF COAST & ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL TASK FORCE



**Senator David Baria**  
Mississippi, Presiding Officer

### LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCY DIRECTORS



**Jerry Bassett, Director**  
Legislative Reference Service, Alabama  
Chair

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



**The South and the nation are facing challenges that will define a generation.** During four days in July, meeting in Memphis, legislators from across the South joined together with policy experts to discuss, review, and consider the opportunities that exist to bring prosperity and promise to states and communities in the region.

In addition to presentations and dialogue on substantive issues, each standing committee of the Southern Legislative Conference conducted a roundtable discussion and summary of legislative activities from the 2011 session, elected officers for the committee, and considered any policy positions that were presented for adoption by members. Presentations from committee sessions, where available, and attendance lists for committee sessions can be found on the SLC website at [www.slcatlanta.org/TN2011](http://www.slcatlanta.org/TN2011).



# AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Representative Terry England**  
Georgia  
Chair

## SUNDAY, JULY 17

### THE IMPACT OF COMMODITY PRICES ON THE FARM ECONOMY AND A FARM BILL OUTLOOK

*Darryl Ray, Ph.D.*, Professor & Blasingame Chair of Excellence, Director of Agricultural Policy Analysis Center, University of Tennessee

*Pat Westhoff, Ph.D.*, Director, Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, Missouri

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### IMMIGRATION REFORM AND AGRICULTURE

*Charles H. Kuck*, Managing Partner, Kuck Immigration Partners LLC--The Immigration Law Firm, Georgia

*Francine Hill*, Deputy Chief, Outreach Branch, Verification Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, Washington, D.C.

### Rural Food Deserts

*Steph Larsen*, Assistant Director of Organizing, Rural Organizing and Outreach Program, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska

### Animal ID Update

*Taylor Woods, DVM*, Director, Animal Health, Missouri Department of Agriculture

## COMMODITY PRICES AND THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Commodity prices, which essentially have doubled over the past year, have provided immediate benefits for crop producers. Even as fuel and input costs have risen, the higher market rates have delivered strong returns

for this sector of the agriculture economy, thereby increasing farm income. Animal producers, however, are feeling the pinch as input costs rise and the economy cuts into demand, putting some out of business. In the long term, cost pressures will cause both crop and livestock production to become concentrated into larger operations, leading producers domestically and internationally to expand output to the greatest possible extent to maximize benefits from the current price situation.

While high prices are a trigger for increased production, increased production inevitably leads to price declines. Furthermore, the long-range trend is for increased production outside of the United States, with foreign nations claiming ever-increasing shares of the global commodity trade. This situation will only exacerbate the tendency for commodity markets to swing unpredictably, resulting in greater disconnects between farm receipts and outlays.

Farm policy, as outlined in the next Farm Bill, will be shaped by the recent debate over the debt ceiling, with many farm payments (such as direct payment) at risk, and some (such as the ethanol tax credit) almost certainly eliminated. The bulk of farm payments has shifted to crop insurance and



*Representative Leonard Bembry, Florida*



conservation, a development that makes crop payments a less significant part of the overall federal role in the agriculture economy.

A key problem the agriculture sector in the United States faces is that national agriculture policy does not provide sufficient protection in an economic contraction even as it is overly generous during expansionary periods. Planning for variability and establishing a policy that responds well to downturns is critical, particularly as agriculture emerges from a boom in commodity prices into an anticipated downward adjustment.

### **IMMIGRATION REFORM AND AGRICULTURE.**

The United States is in the midst of a complex realignment on immigration. The federal government essentially has abdicated much of its responsibility (but not its authority) to manage immigration and, in this vacuum, states have taken action unilaterally. Beginning in 2008, vigorous federal enforcement of immigration laws has cut inflows of immigrants and expanded deportations; in fact, the federal government is deporting as many individuals as its resources allow. The combined impact of state and federal action essentially has been to stop immigration from Mexico, resulting in a net negative flow from the South.

At the same time, perhaps as many as 70 percent of workers in agriculture are undocumented and, due to changes to the federal law dating back to the 1990s, lack any means to become legal. Combined with a trend among even those Hispanic workers who are legal choosing to avoid states with stricter enforcement, agricultural employers currently face a labor crunch that is extreme in several states.

Farmers who turn to the H2A visa for relief discover that the program often is too complex and does not get the right people at the right time. The program, which involves three government agencies, is too slow for the realities of the farm economy and increases the labor costs for producers without any certainty that the labor provided will either arrive on the farm or be able to do the tasks. *E-verify*, the federal program capable of electronically confirming the work status of 98 percent of potential employees within 24 hours, has been promoted in many states. However, the program, while providing initial clearance for employees, has not been



*Representative Phil Richardson, Oklahoma, Representative Gene Maddox, Georgia, and Representative Ellis Black, Georgia*

widely accepted among agricultural operations.

As an example of state initiatives, Utah's immigration reform required the use of *E-verify* and proposed a state-operated guest worker program in concert with the federal government. Neither Congress nor the administration have indicated any interest in extending flexibility to states, however. It is critical to the national agriculture labor issues that a comprehensive solution emerges from Congress.

### **RURAL FOOD DESERTS**

There are a great number of rural places that do not have grocery stores and many rural residents who lack access to transportation, placing these individuals in a tenuous situation in regard to buying food. Moreover, many rural grocery stores do not accept federal food benefits, which results in seniors and low-income residents being unable to access their food aid locally. This results in the allocated federal monies bypassing those rural communities.

Rural grocery stores are keystone institutions for economic development, but they are dependent on community members to support them with their purchases and, at times, their labor. By focusing efforts to sustain and revitalize these stores, rural communities often find they reap unexpected benefits, including improved health, stronger local economies and better prospects for retaining young people.

### **NATIONAL ANIMAL ID UPDATE**

First proposed in 2003, the National Animal ID system was created to provide a means of 'traceback' for animals affected with zoonotic diseases through the food system; improve response time; and minimize costs following the identification of a diseased animal. To be effective, the system must have information on individual animals automatically captured and transferred, typically through tags with radio-frequency identification.

The National Animal ID system is being applied to a range of species, including livestock, poultry and aquaculture, with limited exemptions. The program is being phased in over three steps: (1) tagging of animals 18-months of age and older; (2) 70 percent compliance; and (3) all animals in the system. Monitoring will begin in 2012 with step one; the final phase is scheduled for completion within two to three years.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Senator John R. Unger II**  
West Virginia  
Chair

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### PROMOTING RAIL TRANSIT IN AMERICA

*Senator Jeff Mullis*, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee, Georgia

*John Robert Smith*, President and CEO, Reconnecting America, Washington, D.C.

### TRANSPORTATION LOGISTICS: CRITICAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Delegate Joe T. May*, Chair, House Transportation Committee, Virginia

*Martin Lipinski, Ph.D.*, Director, Intermodal Freight Transportation Institute,  
University of Memphis, Tennessee

*Peter Hurme*, Publisher and Senior Editor, *Cargo Business News*, Washington

## TUESDAY, JULY 19

### ATTRACTING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT: STRATEGIES FROM THE GERMAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Steven Markham*, Vice Chairman, The German American Chamber of Commerce of the  
Southern United States (GACC South), Georgia

### LEVERAGING THE ARTS AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

*Stuart Rosenfeld, Ph.D.*, Principal and Founder, Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.,  
North Carolina

*Susan Schadt*, President and CEO, ArtsMemphis, Tennessee

### PROMOTING RAIL TRANSIT IN AMERICA

There has been renewed interest in promoting rail transit in the United States both at the federal and state level, including in the state of Georgia, which is exploring expanding its transportation options. An important measure related to this effort was the passage of the *Transportation Investment Act* in June 2010. Elected officials in each of the state's 12 regions will develop a list of projects to be funded by a proposed 1 percent sales tax in-

crease, on which Georgians will vote in the 2012 elections. While individual counties cannot opt out, if the tax is approved in a particular region, local governments in that region would share 15 percent of the revenues for projects of their choice. The other 85 percent would be used to fund the list of projects created by each region's transportation roundtable. Based on revenue numbers from 2009, a 1 percent sales tax is expected to generate more than \$1.5 billion per year.







## ATTRACTING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT: STRATEGIES FROM THE GERMAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (GACC SOUTH)

The GACC South is a consulting services company serving primarily small-to medium-sized businesses with German ties (along with numerous large companies such as *ThyssenKrupp*, *Wacker*, *Siemens*, *Bosch*, *T-Mobile*, *BMW*, *Mercedes*, *Bertelsmann*, *Bayer*, *BASF* and *Adidas*) by providing assistance related to market entry and expansion services; business representation; human resources and recruiting; debt collection; market research; administration and back-office operations; event management and marketing services; project management and development services; delegation planning; and other outsourced services. In 2010, German-owned affiliates employed 203,800 workers within the SLC and accounted for 11 percent of the 5.6 million jobs created by foreign-owned companies in the United States.

There often is the misconception that small towns and rural areas do not need to focus on expanding transportation options. This is a grave mistake and, thanks to organizations like Reconnecting America, public and private sector officials across the country are revitalizing and advancing rural towns. In fact, these decisions have led to improving roads and bridges; allowing local officials to participate in planning; shifting the movement of goods from highways to freight rail; and providing rural connectivity through multi-modal solutions. A great example of such a development is the success of Meridian, Mississippi, in transforming its downtown and rail station to a thriving and economically viable community by deploying an array of public and private partners.

### TRANSPORTATION LOGISTICS: CRITICAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There is a critical link between efficient and effective transportation logistics and a thriving economic environment. Memphis ranks high nationally with a multi-modal strategy that includes flourishing rail, air, river and roadway options along with impressive warehouse and distribution facilities. The Memphis metropolitan area has achieved such distinction with its multi-modal capabilities because of a collaborative effort among multiple entities, both public and private. In fact, Memphis' prowess as a transportation and logistics hub remains a model for other regional settings across the country, a development that should be adopted sooner rather than later. Most states and re-

gional settings do not have a cohesive freight policy, and the expansion of the Panama Canal, scheduled for completion by 2014, will pose tremendous challenges to ports in the SLC states unless infrastructure projects are implemented swiftly. In order to promote progress in Memphis, it is critical that both public and private officials recognize the crucial link between transportation and economic development; form critical, effective partnerships; and adhere to an outlined vision while thinking nationally (and regionally) and acting locally.

Virginia made the most significant effort to enhance its transportation infrastructure in more than a generation during the 2011 legislative session with the passage of HB2527 and SB1446, bipartisan legislation to invest nearly \$4 billion into Virginia's road, rail and transit networks and fund more than 900 projects over the next three years without raising taxes. The enhancements include improvements to bridges and rural roads in Southwest Virginia, new capacity and congestion relief in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, and rail and transit improvements throughout Virginia. Analysts estimate that economic activity stimulated by the 900 projects will enable the Virginia economy to expand by more than \$13 billion and support an additional 100,000 jobs. Funding for the projects will flow from the issuance of nearly \$3 billion in bonds and the new Virginia Transportation Infrastructure Bank that will make low-interest loans and grants to localities, transportation authorities and private sector partners for transportation projects.

### LEVERAGING THE ARTS AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

A 'creative enterprise' is any company for which the primary value of its products or services is rooted in their emotional or aesthetic appeal to the customer. An increasing amount of research and case studies document the ability of the creative economy—blending with the arts and cultural attributes of a region, state and city—to generate broad-based, sustained economic growth. While the creative economy is a major job generator, it generally is undervalued and increasingly overlaps with other business clusters. Memphis is a city that places a great deal of emphasis on deploying the arts as a catalyst for economic growth and has seen concrete results in terms of revitalizing neighborhoods; growing communities; attracting and retaining talent; and driving innovative thinking.

# EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Representative Tommy Benton**  
Georgia  
Chair

## SUNDAY, JULY 17

### PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

*Michelle Rhee, Founder and CEO, StudentsFirst, Washington, D.C.*

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### SCHOOL CHOICE: POLICY OPTIONS AND RECENT RESEARCH

*Margaret Raymond, Ph.D., Director, Center for Research on Educational Outcomes, Stanford University, California*

*Marissa Canatta, Ph.D., Associate Director, National Center on School Choice, Vanderbilt University, Tennessee*

### PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

After years of working to affect change from outside the system, the education reform movement has become central to the enterprise of educating America's school children. At the heart of education reform is a focus on putting students and their needs first. To promote excellence in education, it is necessary to shift schools to a culture of connection, collaboration and competition for excellence. Engaging children and families in this manner helps to direct attention toward necessary improvements and ensure that measures of progress and performance are used to guide instruction and the allocation of resources.

Enacting meaningful reforms requires educators and government officials to look for solutions outside of established ideology. By shifting the focus to what is best for children, the conversation over controversial issues, such as vouchers and teacher tenure, becomes very different. Crafting a system that recognizes and rewards the best teachers and identifies those who are in need of improvement, and either quickly accelerates their professional skills or moves them out of the classroom, helps to advance the opportunities for all children. Eventually, this approach will create a system that ensures that all learners achieve their full potential.



*Michelle Rhee, Students First*



*Representative Tommy Benton, Georgia,  
Committee Chair (front right)*

## **SCHOOL CHOICE: POLICY OPTIONS AND RECENT RESEARCH**

Charter schools were developed to serve as centers for innovation and, through competition, spur traditional schools to offer better service to the students who attend them. As the movement marks 20 years, there is sufficient history and experience with these schools to begin investigating their impacts and practices, as well as what the movement means for education in general.

In recent research from the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, national data found considerable variation among charter schools, with 17 percent performing better than traditional schools and 37 percent performing worse. The variations were striking at the state level as well as within states, pointing to significant contributors to school quality that were unrelated to school population.

There are, however, certain state policies that correlate with improved charter school performance, including the absence of a cap on the number of charter schools that can operate in a state and the presence of only one authorizer for charter schools. On the other hand, research also indicates that the market works very poorly at forcing poor-performing charters to improve or close, with a high number of charter schools performing poorly but still in operation. This would indicate a need for a mix of incentives and oversight – particularly on charter authorizers – to improve charter school quality.

Other research on charter schools by the National Center on School Choice at Vanderbilt University finds that charter and traditional

schools share a greater amount of commonality in staffing practice than would be expected, including the amount of time spent on specific tasks by principals and teachers, although differences do appear. Principals in charter schools tend to place greater emphasis in their hiring process on selecting teachers they can ask to assume additional responsibilities and less on those who are able to work with students with special needs or academic challenges. According to the research, teachers at charter schools often view the schools as less desirable places to work or as places to gain experience before moving on to other settings. Reflecting this, about one-third of the charter school workforce is in its first three years of teaching and turnover rates are higher than average. The exception to this is at charter schools that are not affiliated with a management organization, i.e., where teachers often have sought out work at that charter school.

In terms of teaching practices, teachers at charter schools spend more time on academic work and collaboration than their matched peers in traditional schools, although teacher instruction at both types of schools looks relatively similar, unsurprisingly, since both are teaching to meet the same state standards. There are differences among charter schools in terms of the cognitive demands made upon students, with those not affiliated with management organizations spending more time on the lowest cognitive level and less on higher order skills than traditional public schools.



# ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Representative Chuck E. Martin**  
Georgia  
Chair

## SUNDAY, JULY 17

### NUCLEAR ENERGY IN A POST-FUKUSHIMA WORLD

*Victor McCree*, Regional Administrator, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Georgia  
*H. Richard Rogers*, Vice President of Nuclear Operations Support, Tennessee Valley Authority  
*Cheri Collins*, General Manager for External Affairs, Southern Nuclear Company, Georgia

### ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FROM WASTE PLASTICS

*Marco J. Castaldi, Ph.D.*, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Engineering,  
Columbia University, New York

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### RENEWABLE ENERGY:

#### INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION

*Representative Warren Chisum*, Texas  
*Jimmy Glotfelty*, Executive Vice President of External Affairs, Clean Line Energy  
Partners, Texas

### PRESENTATION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES ENERGY BOARD'S 2011 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

*Representative Rocky Adkins*, Kentucky

### NUCLEAR ENERGY IN A POST- FUKUSHIMA WORLD

Following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the resulting meltdowns and the release of radioactive materials at the Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant, there has been renewed public interest in ensuring the safety of the 104 nuclear power plants operating in the United States. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which is assessing the status of nuclear energy production throughout the nation, has found no significant issues that would undermine the confidence in continued safety and emergency planning for U.S. plants. NRC has identified deficiencies in equipment and strategic upgrades that could mitigate threats brought about by natural or man-made hazards. The NRC also has established a special task force to evaluate the procedures used for regulating, issuing licenses, providing oversight, conducting research and responding to emergencies. Further, the NRC issued a report with 12 overarching recommendations for decision-making and long-term responses to disasters that threaten current nuclear safety.

The nuclear industry has responded to recent developments in Japan in a similar fashion. Although all nuclear plants in the

United States are designed to withstand catastrophic events, continuous review of facilities, equipment, plans and procedures is imperative to continued safety and reliability. Sharing information in order to better understand the weaknesses in the Fukushima plant has become a priority for the industry and has assisted with the evaluation of future potential vulnerabilities. Apart from environmental and public safety threats, ensuring electricity reliability is an important objective for the industry, especially for a nation that relies on nuclear production for 20 percent of its electricity. In addition to being cost-competitive and clean, nuclear power provides fuel diversity, which is important to reliability. Also, expansion of nuclear energy can be a key economic development mechanism, particularly during a time of economic strife. For instance, the \$14 billion expansion of Plant Vogtle in Georgia, where two new reactors are planned to come online in 2016 and 2017, is the largest construction project in the state's history. By its completion, it will have created approximately 3,500 construction jobs, as well as 800 permanent jobs, and yield a combined energy output capacity of 2,400 megawatts, enough to power 500,000 homes.



*Victor McCree, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Representative Chuck E. Martin, Georgia, Committee Chair, Senator Denny Altes, Arkansas, Committee Vice Chair*

## **ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FROM WASTE PLASTICS**

Given the ever-increasing pressure to move away from overreliance on fossil fuels, developing innovative ways of utilizing existing renewable and indigenous fuel sources is becoming more important. Converting municipal solid waste (MSW) into energy is an example of such an innovation. There are four main methods for the disposal of MSW: recycling, composting (for organic compounds), landfills and converting them to energy. Recycling is growing; nearly 95 percent of all U.S. households now have access to plastic recycling programs, and more than 4 billion pounds of plastics are recycled annually. While this movement has significant environmental impacts, there are still large amounts of non-compostable and non-recyclable plastics being sent to landfills. With a 12,000 Btu-per-pound ratio, there is a large potential for energy inherent in plastics, greater than even coal or wood. For instance, if all plastics in MSW that went to landfills in 2009 were converted to fuel, it would be enough to power 6 million vehicles or provide power to 4.5 million households. As technology improves through research, risks associated with capital costs of investing in waste-to-energy projects are decreasing. For this reason, it is important that states ensure that such innovations are covered under renewable portfolio standards, renewable fuel standards, or other incentive programs for alternative energy ventures.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY: INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION**

Perhaps the most vexing challenge to the future of clean energy in the United States is the issue of accessibility. The existence of robust transmission systems for transporting renewable energy from where it is produced to where it is consumed is central to this concern. New innovations, such as the use of high-voltage direct current transmission lines that can move large amounts of electricity over long distances, have improved efficiency and reliability. Expansion of transmission capability prompts the growth of production, simply by increasing the ability to use renewable energy in areas in which it would not otherwise be feasible. Such developments are vital, not only to the growth of the industry, but to job creation and the future of the U.S. economy.

## **PRESENTATION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES ENERGY BOARD'S 2011 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

The Legislative Digest is a compilation of energy and environmental legislation enacted by Southern states, published by the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB) for more than four decades. The 2011 SSEB Legislative Digest is available online at [www.sseb.org/reference.php](http://www.sseb.org/reference.php).

# FISCAL AFFAIRS & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Representative James R. "Jim" Fannin**  
Louisiana  
Chair

## SUNDAY, JULY 17

### **POISED TO TAKE OFF? U.S. ECONOMY IN 2011 AND BEYOND**

*Tim Nicholls, Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, International Paper, Tennessee*

### **EFFECTIVE DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICIES: EFFORTS IN TENNESSEE**

*Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller of the Treasury, Tennessee*

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### **PUBLIC PENSION CHALLENGES: RESPONSES FROM OKLAHOMA**

*Representative Randy McDaniel, Oklahoma*

### **MODIFYING PUBLIC PENSIONS: LEGAL AND OTHER CHALLENGES**

*Amy B. Monahan, Professor, University of Minnesota Law School*

### **E-COMMERCE AND STATE FINANCES: LATEST TRENDS**

*William F. Fox, Ph.D., Director and Professor of Economics, Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville*

*David W. Hoyle, Secretary, Department of Revenue, North Carolina*

### **POISED TO TAKE OFF? U.S. ECONOMY IN 2011 AND BEYOND**

A global company like International Paper is uniquely positioned to anticipate the growth trajectory of the economy both in the United States and worldwide. Despite being buffeted by the longest and deepest recession to afflict the nation in more than 60 years, International Paper has emerged with strong earnings and positive cash flow; entered the recovery phase without excess inventory; and, importantly, recovered from the price erosion experienced during the Great Recession. As in many other settings, box demand in the global containerboard industry—a key

indicator of potential economic growth—has been transformed by demand from China, which, in 2010, exceeded total demand from the rest of the world.

### **EFFECTIVE DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICIES: EFFORTS IN TENNESSEE**

In the last few years, a number of local governments around the country—including some in Tennessee—have been forced to grapple with enormous financial liabilities as a result of taking on risky debt instruments to pay for schools, roads and other projects. In response, the Office of the Comptroller



*Representative Mike Sparks, Tennessee*



of the Treasury in Tennessee initiated measures to adopt a model debt management policy as a mechanism to reduce the incidence of local governments contending with significant financial liabilities. The following four principles rank high in the quest for strong financial management in the public sector: understanding the transaction; explaining to citizens what is being considered; avoiding conflicts of interest; and disclosing all costs and risks (real and potential). In addition, at a minimum, sound debt management policy should include transparency; clear demarcation of the role of financial professionals; minimum or no conflict of interest issues; and, finally, specific justification and authorization for deferring principal repayments.

### **PUBLIC PENSION CHALLENGES: RESPONSES FROM OKLAHOMA**

Oklahoma, like many other states, faces substantial public pension challenges. The unfunded actuarial accrued liability for the state's major pension systems currently amounts to more than \$16 billion. In 2011, under the leadership of House Speaker Kris Steele, the state enacted important reform measures to remedy this situation. Among these were: increasing the normal retirement age for new employees; requiring future cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to be fully funded at the time of authorization; enforcing the forfeiture of retirement benefits for municipal employees convicted of certain criminal activities; requiring the timely payments of pension funds to the state's major plans in order to increase efficiencies; and adding transparency to the more than \$200 million that goes directly into the state's teacher plan while increasing funding for this plan by requiring the same funding rate for both full-time and part-time teachers.

### **MODIFYING PUBLIC PENSIONS: LEGAL AND OTHER CHALLENGES**

In recent years, state policymakers in dozens of states have enacted legislative and other changes to lower expenditures related to public pensions. In some instances, these benefit cutbacks have been extended to lower pension benefits for current and future retirees. For instance, in 2009, Minnesota enacted a guaranteed minimum COLA. In 2010, the state repealed that provision and replaced it with lower COLA amounts until the state's retirement plan reached a 90 percent funding level, a decision that was immediately challenged in court. In response, the dis-



*Amy B. Monahan, University of Minnesota Law School*

trict court held that there was no reasonable expectation of a particular COLA; no contract based on statutory language; that even if there was a contract, the change was justified based on the state's authority; and that the decision was part of a broad-based reform that imposed a burden on all affected parties along with the determination that it was reasonable and necessary and served an important public purpose.

### **E-COMMERCE AND STATE FINANCES: LATEST TRENDS**

As states cautiously emerge from the Great Recession, state tax experts recognize a number of structural flaws that continue to bedevil state tax systems. One of these relates to the fact that, generally, sales taxes are not collected on purchases made online. Due to U.S. Supreme Court rulings and federal inaction, state and local governments continue to lose sales and use tax revenue because of their inability to collect taxes on these transactions. The University of Tennessee estimates that in the years 2010 through 2012, state and local government losses will amount to \$8.6 billion, \$10.1 billion and \$11.4 billion, respectively. In response and in the light of federal inaction, states have sought to recoup some of these losses by joining the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement—an agreement that seeks to simplify the rules that govern the collection of sales taxes in more than 8,000 different jurisdictions across the country—and enacting 'click through' laws requiring affiliate marketers to collect sales taxes.

North Carolina approaches the taxation of e-commerce as a fairness issue. In terms of levying sales taxes, the state seeks to ensure that e-commerce companies, such as Amazon, are treated in the same manner as brick-and-mortar retailers that operate in North Carolina. In fact, small businesses in the state are adversely affected by e-commerce retailers not charging sales tax because the advantage of selling an item without the 7 percent sales tax remains significant in a very competitive marketplace. In an effort to collect sales taxes on e-commerce purchases in a uniform manner, North Carolina sought voluntary compliance. Currently, 29 online retailers in North Carolina voluntarily collect and remit sales tax on online purchases, and it is expected that the state will accrue an estimated \$15 million to \$16 million this year. North Carolina's dispute with Amazon involved the state seeking to acquire from the company the dollar amounts of the online purchases made, not information on purchased goods or other products. Amazon sought to block this request and filed suit against North Carolina on the grounds that it violated the First Amendment rights of North Carolina residents. While the initial court ruling supported Amazon's position, the case was then settled.

# HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY



**Representative Sharon Cooper**  
Georgia  
Chair

## SUNDAY, JULY 17

### JUVENILE JUSTICE: ADDRESSING RECIDIVISM THROUGH COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

*Gina M. Vincent, Ph.D., Co-Director, National Youth Screening and Assessment Project, University of Massachusetts Medical School*

*Lee Rone, Chief Operating Officer, Youth Villages, Tennessee*

## MONDAY, JULY 18

### STATE HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

*Anton J. Gunn, Region IV Director, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Georgia*

### PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AND "PILL MILL" REGULATION

*John F. DeRosier, Calcasieu Parish District Attorney, Louisiana*

*Richard McNelis, Assistant General Counsel, Department of Health, Florida*

### HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

*Justin L. Neece, CEO, Shared Health, Tennessee*

### JUVENILE JUSTICE: ADDRESSING RECIDIVISM THROUGH COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

In recent years, there has been a movement across the United States to address growing prison populations by directing resources toward curbing recidivism rates. A major target for these efforts has focused on juvenile cohorts, where the recidivism rates can be as high as 55 percent. The use of risk/needs assessments—an instrument used to gauge potential for serious delinquent offenses or violence—has become an essential tool

for juvenile justice and child welfare agencies, helping states to conserve resources and improve outcomes for youth. Studies have shown that when services are matched to a youth's level of risk and their criminogenic needs, the chance of a re-offense is lowered. In addition to societal benefits, diversion from incarceration has fiscal benefits as well. For instance, overall, a state saves approximately twenty-five dollars for every dollar spent on adolescent diversion projects.



*John F. DeRosier, Calcasieu Parish District Attorney, Louisiana*

The goal, however, is to have the right services available for youth. Programs like Youth Villages prioritize keeping children with their families, when possible, while providing intensive in-home services; safety assessments, psychosocial assessments; strengths and needs reviews; and functional behavioral assessments for placement into crisis programs, foster care, group homes, or transitional living services. The objective of such comprehensive programs is to lower the cost of services through reduced overall length of stay per youth and treatment in the least restrictive environment. This decreases the number of unnecessary out-of-home placements and prevents disruptions from home-based settings that lead to placements in detention centers. Such programs also have proven track records in terms of achieving long-term, successful outcomes for youth.

## STATE HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 contains provisions for every state pertaining to the establishment of a network where individuals and small businesses can shop for health insurance. These “exchanges,” which must be implemented by 2014, aim to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare by expanding coverage; offering new consumer protections and consumer choices; making healthcare more affordable; improving the quality of plans; and improving prevention and overall public health. In addition, the goal of the exchanges is to increase competition among private insurance plans through greater comparative shopping and more informed consumers, including small businesses. Exchanges are intended to expand coverage in the individual and small group markets by offering high value health plans, lowering administrative costs and increasing purchasing power. Another objective is to promote competition by ensuring vastly improved transparency and direct comparisons based on benefits, price and quality. Additionally, exchanges are intended to help ensure accessibility to more affordable health plans through financial assistance, including premium tax credits, cost-sharing reduction and small business tax credits. The exchanges will be designed to drive quality and delivery system reform while ensuring consumer protections.

States will play an integral role in determining how exchanges will function. For instance, a state can establish a nonprofit entity or public/governmental entity to operate an exchange. States have flexibility to deter-

mine the role of agents and brokers in the exchange. Regarding the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP), states may choose to keep an upper limit of 50 employees (a ceiling established for the first two years the exchange is in operation), or include businesses with up to 100 employees starting in 2016. States may choose to operate SHOP as a separate program or merge it with the exchange to offer the same choices to all participants. Qualified health plans must be certified by HHS, but states determine general eligibility requirements for plans. To this end, HHS encourages states to work across state lines in order to collaborate and coordinate on key implementation issues.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AND “PILL MILL” REGULATION

The proliferation of prescription drug abuse in Southern states has become particularly problematic in recent years, leading to a doubling in drug overdoses during the last decade. Overdose associated with prescription drug abuse has become the leading cause of accidental death in several SLC states. In response, states are working diligently to address these trends, predominantly through the establishment of prescription monitoring programs (PMPs), similar to those established to monitor purchases of pseudoephedrine for the production of crystal methamphetamine. For instance, in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana, law enforcement and government officials have worked together, utilizing PMPs, to stop practices of “doctor shopping” and the sale and trafficking of prescription drugs. In 2006, there were 68 deaths in the Parish from the overdose of prescription medication; that number dropped

to 25 in 2009. The importance of regional collaboration is imperative in this effort. While some states make it a felony to “doctor shop,” in others, the practice is a misdemeanor. Similarly, while most SLC states have legislation that establishes PMPs, these programs vary widely, hence the propagation of trafficking in prescription drugs.

## HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Health information technology (IT) is dramatically influencing the way healthcare is delivered and consumed in the United States. Driven by the prospect of better quality and efficiency for providers and patients, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has allocated substantial funding toward health IT. These resources are used in gathering patient data and establishing tools for exchanging data, so that physician performance and patient outcomes can be maximized. Services created by this funding include: exchange of clinical information; interactive dashboards for allowing physicians to manage patient populations and performance; multi-condition registries that allow tracking of key clinical indicators across the continuum of care; web-based electronic prescribing solutions, allowing users to create and submit new prescriptions and manage refills; and patient access to health records.





# GULF COAST & ATLANTIC STATES REGIONAL TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY



**Senator David Baria**  
Mississippi  
Presiding Officer



*Art Faulkner, Director, Alabama Emergency  
Management Agency*

**SUNDAY, JULY 17**

## **WEATHERING THE STORM: ALABAMA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S BEST PRACTICES**

*Art Faulkner, Director, Alabama Emergency Management Agency*

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE REGION'S WATERWAYS**

*Diana Threadgill, Executive Director, Mississippi River Corridor, Tennessee*

*Greg Maxted, P.E., Executive Director, Harahan Bridge Project, Tennessee*

## **WEATHERING THE STORM: ALABAMA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S BEST PRACTICES**

On April 27 this year, 67 tornadoes touched down in Alabama, killing 244 people and injuring thousands. While Alabama was hit the hardest, the storms spanned eight Southern states and stretched federal resources across the region. In less than three months, Alabama has made major strides toward recovery, including the removal of 8.6 million cubic yards of debris and the distribution of \$64 million to assist disaster victims. The Alabama Emergency Management Agency compiled a list of best practices from the lessons learned during what has been called the most devastating tornado season in 61 years.

The importance of early action from lawmakers ranks high as a crucial step in disaster preparedness. Shortly after the first tornado touched down in the state, the governor mobilized the National Guard and deployed the state's mutual aid assets. The swift deployment of well-trained and well-equipped resources, funded by the state's homeland security dollars, proved to be invaluable in the response and recovery efforts.

Lessons were learned regarding mobile communication during catastrophic events. Following a disaster, cell phone users are encouraged to send text messages since voice services often are interrupted as a result of downed cell phone towers and overwhelmed wireless networks. However, text messages are delivered with more consistency as a result of the smaller size of data required for message transmission. First responders are able to use this information to assist with search and rescue.

Storm shelters also are named as a best practice for homeowners and community leaders. These shelters or safe-houses often were

the only buildings left intact following the tornado(es). According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, funds made available from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program have subsidized 568 shelters as of December 31, 2003. Of these, 559 were individual shelters, with an average reimbursement to the owner of \$2,910. An additional nine community shelters were constructed at an average reimbursement of \$20,800.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE REGION'S WATERWAYS**

The development and conservation of the natural and cultural resources in the Lower Mississippi Basin are critical to the Southern region. The Mississippi River Corridor assists communities in the region with the creation of development models that are environmentally and economically sustainable by providing a framework for collaborative partnerships, including enhancements to the existing Great River Road – National Scenic Byway, which borders the Mississippi River in Tennessee and connects nine other states.

Cutting edge development ideas involve the utilization of levees for new and viable recreational trails in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, as well as the Harahan Bridge project to connect downtown Memphis, Tennessee, to Crittenden County, Arkansas, for bicycle and pedestrian traffic across the Mississippi River. Blueprints for the Harahan bridge connector are currently being drafted to include new routes to be constructed on top of the existing structural steel. The paths will be constructed of non-flammable and non-slip materials that are friendly to bikers, walkers and strollers. Additionally, the connector will include security fencing on the bridge to prevent access to the working rail bed. From these projects, the Mississippi River Corridor anticipates a total economic impact of over \$6 billion dollars to the region.

# LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCY DIRECTORS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY

SATURDAY, JULY 16

## TECHNOPHILES AND TECHNOPHOBES: FINDING A HAPPY MEDIUM

*Sharon Crouch Steidel*, Director of Information Services, House Clerk's Office, Virginia  
*Richard Olsen*, Staff Attorney, Division of Legislative Services, West Virginia  
*Aaron Allred*, Legislative Manager, West Virginia Legislature,  
*Todd Wellman*, Senior Systems Engineer, Apple Inc., Kentucky

## DRAWING THE LINES IN THE SOUTH: CONSENSUS AFTER THE CENSUS

*Cathy McCully*, Chief, Census Redistricting Data Office, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C.  
*Joseph Barnes*, Director, Office of Legal Services, Tennessee  
*Teresa Tiller*, Director, Legislative Services Office, Mississippi  
*Mary Quaid*, Executive Director, House Legislative Services, Louisiana  
*E.M. Miller, Jr.*, Director, House Legislative Services, Virginia (1988-2011, retired)



**Jerry Bassett, Director**  
Legislative Reference Service,  
Alabama  
Chair

## TECHNOPHILES AND TECHNOPHOBES: FINDING A HAPPY MEDIUM

New technology pilot projects in the Virginia House of Delegates and the West Virginia Senate allow legislators and staff to utilize the Apple iPad technology for a variety of applications. Currently, there are 100,000 applications available for the tablet technology, and the number grows daily.

Virginia's pilot project began in the fall of 2010 with the selection and training of 16 members (40 had requested to participate) based on interest level, computer proficiency and seniority. The project examined several variables including: cost effectiveness, user friendliness and overall utility for committee meeting and floor sessions. During the initial pilot period, several obstacles were found inherent in the use of the technology, namely font issues with electronic bills in PDF file format, support issues and distribution of software, flash content, and tackling the move away from paper bill copies and the perception of whether the iPad is more business tool or toy.

The West Virginia Senate project also experienced many of the same issues in use and efficacy. An application was developed by the Senate to allow access to pertinent Senate information and also allow members to communicate with one another and House members, as well as take notes during committee meetings.

The Virginia project continues with several positive reports by pilot members, such as: great interface for downloading budget analysis reports; uniform e-mail interface; ease of use in meetings and on the floor; long battery life and facilitation of information-sharing. Work has begun on an application for electronic committee and subcommittee agendas, and an "electronic bill book."

The West Virginia Senate has begun using the iPad 2 following the success of their pilot project. This will allow Senators to view bills, amendments and abstracts in real time and is expected to reduce waste and printing costs, providing significant revenue savings.

## DRAWING THE LINES IN THE SOUTH: CONSENSUS AFTER THE CENSUS

Article 1, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires a census to be taken every 10 years for the purpose of the apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives. Subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions mandated that U.S. Congressional districts and state legislative districts must be drawn so that their residents have a fair and equal share in their governments. Ideally, the districts would reflect equivalent populations, with variance kept to a minimum.

While the overall 2010 U.S. resident populations rose approximately 9.7 percent to nearly 309 million people, nearly half of the SLC states were shown to have double-digit increases: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Vir-

ginia. Many of the respective districts in these states experienced a significant population percentage change on the state level. Of note, Louisiana lost a congressional seat—with the seven congressional districts redrawn into six—as did Missouri. Four SLC member states gained one or more seats: Florida (2), Georgia (1), South Carolina (1), and Texas (4).

With the population changes in Virginia reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in February 2011, many of the districts were redrawn as well. The redistricting plans for both Virginia and Louisiana have been pre-cleared by the U.S. Justice Department. However, pre-clearance does not preclude challenges under Section 2. In March, a federal lawsuit was filed to stop the adoption of the new proposed Mississippi plan. A three-judge panel ruled in May that the state could craft a workable map immediately and gain pre-clearance by June 1, 2011, or hold the 2011 elections under the current district map, noting that the state can craft new maps in the 2012 legislative session. In June, an appeal to that ruling was filed with the U.S. Supreme Court.

The census data for Tennessee indicated a population increase of 11.5 percent statewide. The current districts, when adopted in 2002, reflected little variance, but the new census data calculations show dramatic increases in the difference between the highest and lowest district populations for both the House and Senate. Tennessee began its redistricting process in June 2011 with the goal to draft plans for approval early in 2012.

# COMMITTEE TECHNICAL TOURS



*The farmer's market at Agricenter.*

This year's technical tours for the SLC Annual Meeting invited legislators to get a first-hand look at some of the unique facilities that call Memphis home. The three tours took in four destinations that illustrate the many ways public and private endeavors are creating solutions to pressing problems in the region, and offering opportunities for businesses, government agencies and the public to succeed and thrive.

## **DUCKS UNLIMITED INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS & AGRICENTER**

Memphis is home to **Ducks Unlimited**, the world leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. The Ducks Unlimited International Headquarters features tours and displays of wetlands ecosystems, and an excellent overview to one of the most widely respected conservation organizations in the world.

**Agricenter**, located only minutes from downtown Memphis, is the world's largest urban farm and research test facility. The center is a world-class showcase to the agricultural and non-agricultural public,

facilitating agricultural research, educational programs, environmental conservation, natural area preservation and recreational opportunities. Participants reviewed the farmers market operations, toured the center's extensive field test facilities, and heard a presentation on a groundbreaking hydro-electric turbine being developed at the facility for use in the Mississippi River.

## **FEDEX WORLD HUB IN MEMPHIS**

The **Memphis World Hub** is the oldest and largest facility in the FedEx Express network. It connects customers to more than 220 countries and territories on six continents. Situated on approximately 727 acres, the facility operates with a workforce of more than 15,000. More than 5,000 flights pass through the hub each month. The hub's sorting system contains more than 300 miles of conveyor belts capable of processing approximately a half million packages per hour. The small-package sort system processes up to 325,000 packages per hour, while the box sorting "matrix" system processes 160,000 packages per hour. Overall, more than 2 million packages move through the



*Representative Sharon Cooper, Georgia, at the Medical Education and Research Institute*

Memphis hub each business day. The Memphis hub, the centerpiece of the FedEx global distribution system, is routinely lauded for delivery and distribution professionalism and, in 2010, was awarded Institute of Transport Management's "Best Global Cargo Hub." The Committee technical tour provided a glimpse into all these operations along with economic impact details.

## **MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

The **Medical Education and Research Institute (MERI)** is a nonprofit medical teaching and training school in Memphis. MERI conducts state-of-the-art, hands-on educational courses for physicians, nurses and other medical professionals from across the country and around the world. At MERI, medical professionals are introduced to the latest innovations in medicine, and have the opportunity to learn firsthand about the most up-to-date medical techniques and technologies. Members were provided with a general tour of MERI facilities and participated in hands-on disaster response simulations, led by paramedics and disaster preparedness personnel.



# CONFERENCE NOTES

## CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS (CALs) ALUMNI RECEPTION



*Senator Gloria Butler, Georgia, Senator Eric Powell, Mississippi, Jan Yonts and Representative Brent Yonts, Kentucky*

The Southern Office of The Council of State Governments and Southern Legislative Conference have a long history of providing leadership training opportunities to state elected officials. With the implementation of term limits in five SLC-member states, and in recognition of the changing political landscape in the South, the Executive Committee of SLC approved the establishment of the Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills to help emerging leaders from the South develop their communication, conflict resolution, consensus building and critical decision-making skills. CALs offers full scholarships for candidates from the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government.

## POLICY POSITIONS ADOPTED AT THE 65TH SLC ANNUAL MEETING

The Southern Legislative Conference adopted four policy positions at the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting:

1. **Regarding the Impact of EPA Regulations on Southern States**
2. **Supporting Continued Nuclear Energy Financing at Oak Ridge National Laboratory**
3. **Supporting Advanced Access to HMAP Funding**
4. **Combatting Prescription Drug Trafficking and Abuse**

To view the full text of these policy positions and those of previous years, please visit [www.slcatlanta.org/policy\\_positions/](http://www.slcatlanta.org/policy_positions/). **Note:** In accordance with SLC Rule VIII, these Policy Positions of the Southern Legislative Conference shall be sunset one calendar year following adoption by the Conference.

## THOMAS B. MURPHY LONGEVITY OF SERVICE AWARD



**Senator John Whitmire, Texas**

A member of the SLC Human Services & Public Safety Committee and Fiscal Affairs & Government Operations Steering Committee, Texas Senator John Whitmire has served the people of Texas since 1973. With 10 years of experience as a state representative and 28 years as a state senator, he now serves as Dean of the Texas Senate. He has worked tirelessly to bring about needed changes to the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems, as well as toward finding appropriate solutions for funding the state's many agencies and programs.

## CSG INNOVATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

Sixteen panelists, comprising lawmakers and staff from the SLC's 15-member states, selected two Southern finalists for the 2011 Innovations Awards program, both of which were from the state of North Carolina. The first, Criminal Justice Law Enforcement Automated Data Services (CJLEADS), integrates criminal justice data from a variety of state criminal justice organizations to create comprehensive profiles of offenders, and provides this information to criminal justice professionals through a single, secure web-based application. The second, Probation/Parole Officer's Dashboard (PPO Dashboard), is a tool used to assist probation and parole officers with the management of large offender caseloads by interfacing with the Office of the Courts to receive daily alerts of new criminal and infraction activities in this population. The Council of State Governments (CSG) began an Innovations Transfer Program in 1975 to highlight and share information about inventive and effective state programs across the United States. CSG's headquarters and SLC staff review the applications each year and determine eight finalists to make presentations at the SLC Annual Meeting.

## CARTER/HELLARD LEGISLATIVE STAFF AWARD



**E.M. Miller, Jr.,** Director, Division of Legislative Services (retired), Virginia

E.M. Miller, Jr. served as the director of the Division of Legislative Services of the Commonwealth of Virginia from 1988 to 2011. Prior to 1988, he was the staff director of the Senate Finance Committee of the Virginia General Assembly. He has worked in the legislative branch since graduating law school in 1972 in the capacity of staff attorney, budget analyst, and as director. He holds a J.D. degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law and a B. A. degree from the University of Richmond. He is licensed to practice law in Virginia and North Carolina and is a member of the Virginia Code Commission, and the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council. He has been a member of the Uniform Law Commission since 1988.

## COMPARATIVE DATA REPORTS

Comparative Data Reports (CDRs) are prepared annually by select SLC states' fiscal research departments. Because CDRs track a multitude of revenue sources and appropriations levels in Southern states, they provide a useful tool to legislators and legislative staff alike as they determine their own state spending. The reports presented at the SLC Annual Meeting were:

- » Education
- » Medicaid
- » Revenue
- » Transportation
- » Adult Corrections

Comparative Data Reports are prepared under the auspices of the Conference's Fiscal Affairs & Government Operations Committee. Reports for 2011 and dating back to 2000 are available through the SLC website at [www.slcatlanta.org/publications.shtml](http://www.slcatlanta.org/publications.shtml).

# A THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

The Southern Legislative Conference extends special thanks to the following friends in the private sector for their generous assistance with the general and substantive committee programs for our 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. We are grateful for their continued support and interest in the Conference over the years.

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Ameila Mitchell  
Nanatte Mitchell  
Daveisha Moore

Megan Moore  
Jacqueline Nash  
Ross Nichols  
Rick Nicholson  
Alan Osborne  
Paul Overholser  
Ethan Page  
Joshua Parent  
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Laura Pendleton  
Sharon Peters  
Marianne Purcell  
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<b>JEREMY</b> Williams	Policy Analyst (Energy & Environment; Human Services & Public Safety; Legislative Service Agency Directors Group)
<b>ELIZABETH</b> Lewis	Senior Program Manager (Legislative Staff Exchange Program; Event Coordinator)
<b>MIKKO</b> J. Lindberg	Research Associate
<b>LORI</b> Jones-Rucker	Program Manager (Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills; Gulf Coast & Atlantic States Regional Task Force)
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